

1       **Specification:**

2  
3                   **Title:** Inflatable Hoop/Basket/Goal

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9                   This application is a continuation of my provisional patent  
10  
11 application number 60/262,793, filing date 1/22/01.

12  
13                   The present invention relates to an inflatable  
14  
15 Hoop,/Basket,/Goal. Such structures may be used for a variety of  
16  
17 purposes but principally this structures proposed use is for a  
18  
19 recreational aid in the form of a goal or hoop that allows the user to  
20  
21 throw, shoot, or kick a ball or object through the goal or hoop. The  
22  
23 inflatable hoop/basket/goal can be used on any surface, indoors or  
24  
25 outdoors. The invention is portable and being inflatable makes it easily  
26  
27 assembled (Inflated) and stored.

28  
29                   The present invention provides an inflatable tubular  
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31 framework comprising of inflatable tubular members. When inflated  
32  
33 the tubular uprights (Legs) joined by the arches that are attached to  
34  
35 the goal or hoop create a self supporting structure. An internal  
36  
37 bladder system gives the structure its sturdyness. The inflatable

1 tubular members can be made of plastics or strong fabric. They can be  
2  
3 welded, glued or sewn together. The internal bladders can be made of  
4  
5 plastics or rubberised fabrics that will seal air tight. The netting may  
6  
7 be made of plastics or a yarn material.  
8

9           Preferably, a plurality of anchorage points are provided  
10  
11 along each tubular member intended in use to be lowermost.  
12  
13 Anchorage points may also be provided on tubular members intended in use  
14  
15 to be lowermost. Anchorage points may also be provided on tubular  
16  
17 members intended to be at an upper part of the structure in use and guylines  
18  
19 may be attached at these points in the form of ballasts.  
20

21           Suitably, the framework structure may be provided in association  
22  
23 with means for anchoring or weighing down the structure, such as weighted  
24  
25 lines or pegs or stakes for driving into the ground. Preferably means for  
26  
27 weighing down the structure are provided comprising a plurality of  
28  
29 containers/ballasts such as bags adapted to be filled in use with a material  
30  
31 such as sand or soil or with a liquid such as water.  
32

33           Preferably, the anchorage points mentioned above may be  
34  
35 provided as protruding tabs of the material of the inflatable structure  
36  
37 provided with reinforced holes therein for receiving anchorage lines or  
38  
39 ballasts.

1           It can be seen that the tubular frameworks illustrated can, when  
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3 deflated, be stored in a compact and convenient manner and can  
4  
5 conveniently be transported for use at the beach or on picnics or in other  
6  
7 recreational situations. They may then be inflated by the use of a  
8  
9 conventional foot pump or other compressed gas source to provide in a very  
10  
11 short time a goal/hoop or basket for use in a game of basketball, soccer, ect..

12  
13           Whilst the invention has been described with reference to specific  
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15 characteristics of the embodiments illustrated, many modifications and  
16  
17 variations are possible within the scope of the invention.

## Background of Invention

This application is a continuation of my provisional patent application number 60/262,793, filing date 1/22/01.

## Field of Invention

This invention relates to inflatable structures and is particularly directed to portable inflatable structures for indoor and outdoor use as a sports goal, hoop, or basket.

## Prior Art

In the past there have been numerous types of inflatable objects, such as balloons, simulated furniture, and various types of flotation devices.

This invention is of an upright, free standing, inflatable goal, hoop or basket.

It is composed of inflatable portions which are interconnected and include four equally spaced legs. Each leg in turn is connected by an arched section.

Each arched section is attached to the circular hoop or goal creating one complete structure. A mesh netting is attached to the interior circumference of the circular hoop, hanging from the hoop or basket.

1       **Objects and Brief Summary of the Invention**  
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3               An object of the present invention is to provide an inflatable sports  
4 goal which is strong and rigid when erected.  
5

6               Another object of the present invention is to provide a free  
7 standing, upright sports goal which is strong and rigid when erected, yet  
8 which can quickly and easily be disassembled for portability and storage.  
9

10              An additional object of the present invention is to provide a free  
11 standing, upright sports goal comprising an inflatable framework, together  
12 with a casing formed of non-elastic material, to form a sports goal which is  
13 strong and rigid when erected, yet which can quickly and easily be  
14 disassembled for portability or storage.  
15

16              A specific object of the present invention is to provide a free  
17 standing, upright sports goal structure having a plurality of inflatable tubes  
18 joined to form the framework of a free standing, upright goal structure,  
19 together with an outer casing of non-elastic material which encloses the  
20 inflatable framework and serves to form a strong rigid goal structure which is  
21 useful in a plurality of sports that would include basketball, soccer or any ball  
22 game played with the goal, yet which can quickly and easily be erected or  
23 collapsed for convenient transportation and storage, together with an  
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1 improved method of manufacturing the same.

2  
3 These and other objects and features of the present invention will  
4 be apparent from the following detailed description, taken with reference to  
5 the figures of the accompanying drawing.  
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7

8  
9 **Brief Description of Drawings**

10  
11 **FIGURE 1** is a front view of a sports goal embodying the present  
12 invention;  
13

14  
15 **FIGURE 2** is a cut out side view of the sports goal of **FIG. 1**;

16  
17 **FIGURE 3** is a top view of the sports goal of **FIG. 1**;

18  
19 **FIGURE 4** is an isometric view showing the inflatable framework  
20 for the sports goal of **FIG. 1**;  
21

22  
23 **FIGURE 5** is an isometric view of the sports goal of **FIG. 1**  
24 showing the zippers for the insertion of the inflatable bladders.  
25

26  
27 **FIGURE 6** is an isometric view of the sports goal showing the  
28 inflation/deflation valve locations.  
29

30  
31 **FIGURE 7** is an isometric view of the sports goal of **FIG. 1**  
32 showing the goal, free standing and upright ready for use.  
33

34  
35 **FIGURE 8** is a top view of the sports goal ready to receive a ball  
36 (Any type) into the round goal area.  
37

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39 **FIGURE 9** is a side view of the free standing, upright goal with a

1 ball (Any type) approaching the hoop or goal area.

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3 **Description of the Preferred Embodiment**

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5 In that form of the present invention chosen for purposes of  
6  
7 illustration, FIGS. 4, 5, and 6 show a sports goal, indicated generally at 10,  
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9 having four vertical arches with slanted legs 11, with each individual leg  
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11 joining 12 equally and laterally with the individual leg that corresponds to it  
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13 realative to the four points that create the square shape at the base from the  
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15 eight legs of the arches 11. The illustration of FIG. 3 shows the top view of  
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17 the sports goal as generally indicated at 13, where the joining of the large  
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19 inflatable hoop 14 to the very top of each arch with slanted legs 11 is seen at  
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21 each individual corresponding place 15. The illustration of FIG. 2 shows a  
22  
23 cut out side view of the sports goal as generally indicated at 16, where the  
24  
25 position of the joining between the large inflatable hoop 14 and the open  
26  
27 ended tubular shaped netting 17 is clearly shown at 18 where it hugs the inner  
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29 radious of the large inflatable hoop 14.

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31 To provide for quick and easy erection and disassembly to a  
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33 convient size for portability and storage, the sports goal 10 is formed of an  
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35 inflatable framework, indicated generally at 19 in FIGS. 4, 5, and 6 and  
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37 comprising of five inflatable bladders, as seen at 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24,  
38  
39 respectively, together with a casing 25 formed of non-elastic material and

1 carrying the open ended tubular shaped netting 17.

2  
3 The casing 25 has slits 26 provided at convenient locations equally  
4 upon each individual arch with slanted legs 11, as seen in FIG. 1 to allow  
5 inflatable bladders 20, 21, 22, and 23 of framework 19 to be inserted therein.  
6  
7 The casing 25 has a slit 27 provided at a convenient location upon the large  
8 inflatable hoop 14 as seen in FIG. 3 to allow for the inflatable bladder 24 of  
9 framework 19 to be inserted therein. Because casing 25 is formed of non-  
10 elastic material, it will form a strong and rigid structure when inflatable  
11 framework 19 is inserted and inflated.  
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19 At the same time, sports goal 10 can quickly and easily be erected  
20 or disassembled, when desired, for portability and storage, and, once  
21 disassembled, will occupy a minimum of space. Also, sports goal 10 is  
22 extremely light and buoyant and, hence, will float on water for use in water  
23 basketball and other water sports. Finally, if desired, flaps with hooks 28, 29,  
24 30, and 31 may be provided adjacent the respective pairs of legs 11 of casing  
25 25 to receive suitable weights within vinyl bags, such as stones, sand, and the  
26 like to weigh the sports goal to the ground in a desired location.  
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34 When deflated, inflatable framework 19 and casing 25 can be  
35 folded and stored in a minimum of space and will be quite light, so that  
36 sports goal 10 can easily be transported in a suitable carrying case, not  
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1 shown, to a desired location. At the desired location, inflatable bladders 20,  
2 21, 22, 23, and 24 can be inflated and assembled inside casing 25 and  
3 deflated as one complete assembly. Next, the assembled inflatable network  
4 19 can be inserted into slots 26 and 27 of casing 25 to form sports goal 10,  
5 as seen in FIGS. 4, 5, and 6. Finally, sports goal 10 can be oriented as  
6 desired, and suitable means such as weights can be applied to the flaps 28,  
7 29, 30, and 31 to weigh down the sports goal 10 in a desired position.  
8

9 Obviously, numerous other variations and modifications can be  
10 made without departing from the spirit of the present invention. Therefore, it  
11 should be clearly understood that the forms of the present invention  
12 described above and shown in the figures of the accompanying drawing, are  
13 illustrative only and are not intended to limit the scope of this invention.  
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1       **Industrial Applicability**

2               Once inflated and assembled, sports goal/hoop is quite rigid and  
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4       will be extremely strong. Obviously, sports goal/hoop can be mounted on  
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6       dirt, sand, gymnasium, grass or paved surfaces, as desired, for use with  
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8       basketball, soccer or any type balls. Alternatively, because framework is  
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10       inflatable, it is also capable of floating on water. Therefore, sports goal/hoop  
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12       can be used for water sports, in addition to its use on land.  
13